



# *The 1977 Limerick*

## *Sports*

## *Personalities*



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## THE LIMERICK WEEKLY ECHO & SHANNON NEWS

SINCE its first publication in 1897, the Limerick Weekly Echo has been part of the sporting history of Limerick. In its pages, year after year, generation after generation, the great and dramatic achievements of Limerick's sportsmen have been publicised.

However, the changing years have seen the different sports flourish and grow strong with the support of the people of Limerick. The city has a proud reputation on the sportsfield of the nation and it is fitting then that the Limerick Echo should pay tribute to the men and women who bring sporting glory to our native place.

The years have also seen the Limerick Echo become a strong and fearless voice for the cause of Limerick. There have been many highlights in the history of the paper, but the most important was in 1974 when the Limerick Echo became the first web offset newspaper, capable of giving full colour, in the Mid-West Region.

The Limerick Echo has moved with the changing times, and now with the announcement of the Sports Personalities of 1977, the paper is proud to thank the Award winners on behalf of the people of Limerick. The Awards, being presented by His Worship, the Mayor, Cllr. Frank Prendergast, represent the feelings of Limerick Echo readers to acknowledge our sports people in a fitting tribute.

This event is a milestone for both the Limerick Echo and for the sporting codes. Over eighty years ago, the first issue of the Limerick Weekly Echo said the paper was "Bright, Crisp and Readable." We would like to feel that we have lived up to that slogan, and that the Limerick Echo will continue to record the sporting history of Limerick.





## KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN

Man behind the Kentucky Fried Chicken success story in Ireland is Tipperary born Pat Grace, who has seen his business grow from one small shop in Phibsboro to eight shops spread throughout the country . . . and Pat has plans for further expansion in the near future. At the age of 24, Pat left his native Nenagh and emigrated to Canada where he remained until 1969, when he obtained the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise for the 32 counties and returned to set up his business empire.

Pat's first involvement in sports sponsorship came in the early months of 1977 when he was approached by Limerick Chairman Mr. Webb with a view to sponsoring the local soccer team. Readily acknowledging the tremendous efforts Limerick were making to get back on the soccer map, Pat was only too happy to provide some attractive incentives

for the players and they responded by doubling their efforts to gain success.

From his home in Killaloe, where he is married with two children, Emma and Karl, Pat oversees his business interests and, throughout the country, he now employs a staff of 45 people. Pat is quick to praise the ability and loyalty of his staff and he is a firm believer in giving his workers the opportunity of voicing their opinions on the business.

Naturally, Pat is a keen supporter of the Limerick soccer team and he admits to having an open mind as to the possibility of joining the Board of Directors "if I could contribute anything I would only be too happy to do so", were his comments to us. The generous sponsorship of the Sports Personality Awards by Pat's firm will be appreciated by all sports supporters.





## JUNIOR SOCCER —

## PADDY CUSACK

WITH close to 2,000 players registered locally by L.D.M.C., it is only fitting that Junior Soccer should be one of the sports chosen to receive a Personality award. In 1977, the L.D.M.C. team overcame all the odds in winning the prestigious Oscar Traynor Trophy and the man mainly responsible for their win was manager Paddy Cusack. A former junior player of note with Ballynanty Rovers, Paddy had previously managed an L.D.M.C. Youth team to win National honours in 1972.

In earlier games in the Oscar Traynor competition, Paddy experimented to find the best possible XI and when the final against the powerful Leinster League came, the introduction of Fintan Lawlor, Pius Finnan and Sean O'Callaghan proved decisive. After winning, a real spin-off for local football came when three of Paddy's choices, Jackie Ryan, Brendan Storan and Niall Darcy were honoured with selection for the Irish Junior team. A long-time member of L.D.M.C. Paddy is one of the most respected individuals on the local junior scene.



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## HORSE RACING —

# TOMMY CARMODY

HE'S going to be Champion National Hunt Jockey next year and you can quote me on that", those are the words of confidence in young Tommy Carmody, expressed by his 'master' Curragh trainer Liam Brown, when our reporter interviewed him recently. Since joining the racing game six years ago, Tommy has had a dramatic rise to fame. First spotted by Liam Browne when riding in a 'pony-race, 21 year old Tommy has fully justified the confidence his 'guvnor' placed in him when he choose the then seventeen year-old Tommy to succeed "Buster" Parnell as his first jockey,

Success quickly followed for Tommy, a first-race win on the one-eyed Tameric and, then, a share of the Apprentice Championship with Declan Gillespie. 1977 has seen Tommy concentrate more on the National Hunt and, because of increasing weight, he reckons his future is at this branch of the sport. Tommy



rates Ridaness and Mr. Kildare as the best horses he had ridden and he has particular respect for the abilities of fellow jockeys, Wally Swinburn, Christy Roche and Tommy Carberry.







## HOCKEY — MARIE BARTLETT



IN Hockey circles, 1977 will be remembered as the year that the Irish Ladies team won the Triple Crown after a wait of 27 years. One of the central figures in the Irish side was Limerick's own Marie Bartlett. A long-time member of the Irish team . . . 31 times capped and more to follow . . . Marie was never less than superb at centre-half and her experience proved a vital asset to her colleagues.

Understandably, Marie takes great pride in wearing the Irish

Jersey, but she confesses to getting 'quite tense' before playing an important game with her club team, Catholic Institute and the Munster Cup and League medals she has gained with Institute are amongst her proudest possessions. Extremely versatile in her earlier career . . . playing at left-inner and left-half . . . Marie has now settled into a permanent centre-half role and she has special regard for the abilities of club colleagues Sarah Devane, and Marie Crawford.





KEVIN FITZPATRICK



SOCCER —

JOHN HERRICK

WHEN one considers that at the start of last season, John Herrick was contemplating lining out with the John Coughan managed Ballincollig in Cork Junior Soccer circles, his subsequent magnificent and inspiring return to L.O.I. football must be seen as a really outstanding achievement. In my view, the commitment and example given by Herrick to his younger colleagues was a very decisive factor in Limerick's path to the Final. Once a member of the Queens Park Rangers reserve team, Herrick has earned many distinctions during his colourful career. In addition to League and F.A.I. Cup honours gained with Cork Hibernians, John has won three full International caps against Austria (1971); Chile (1972) and France (1973 — a World Cup Game). John has also won three Inter-League caps.

In his younger days, John played alongside Barry McGann and 'Blondie' Carroll in a star-studded Glasheen under-age team. Without hesitation, John nominates Frank O'Neill (Shamrock Rovers) as the most difficult opponent he has faced and he cites a fellow Corkonian, Mick Coady, as being a



tremendous help in planning fitness programmes. It's not commonly known that John once played centre-forward for Cork Hibs for a spell and he proudly recalls that he scored six goals during one season from that position. Since taking over as manager of Limerick A.F.C. John has wielded his team into one of the most attractive teams in the League.





*Ronnie Long*

ATHLETICS —

**NEIL**

**CUSACK**

AFTER a year or two in the Athletics wilderness, Neil Cusack really established himself as a National Force in 1977. Dedication is the name of the game as far as Neil is concerned and the 140/150 miles that he regularly clocks up in weekly training certainly stood to him this season. Success in the 10,000 metres Championship at Belfield was followed by a close-up sixth in an International Marathon in Czechoslovakia . . . Olympic Champion Waldimir Cierpinski of East Germany finished two places in front of Neil. Later, at Loughrea, Neil finished second to Great Britain's Brendan Foster in the Annual Road-Race.

Twice a competitor in the Olympic Games, in Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976, Neil has his long-term sights set on representing Ireland in Moscow in 1980. A protege of the East Tennessee State University, Neil's



American achievements included a win in the famous Boston Marathon in 1974 . . . nearly 3,000 competed . . . and he also set a European Indoor 3 mile record of 13-10 the same year.



*Pat Hartigan*

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HURLING —

# JIM O'BRIEN

AS FAR as the County Hurling team were concerned, 1977 was a pretty dismal year. All told, very few success stories were recorded, but one of the few highlights that hurling fans will look back on was the superb consistency of Bruree's Jim O'Brien in the heart of the Limerick defence. Not every supporter of the code was happy with the transfer of Pat Hartigan to centre-back with normal left-corner back Jim O'Brien taking over the full-back duties. However, the move worked to perfection, with the Bruree defender proving the able of the best full-forwards in the country in his new role.

A regular on the County team for close to a decade, Jim first came to prominence in 1963, when he played for the minor team defeated in the All-Ireland Final by Wexford . . . Jim was also on the team which lost to Cork in the Under 21 Final in 1966. As corner-back, Jim figured on the N.H.L. winning team in 1971, as well as the All-Ireland side of 1973. An all-Star in 1973,



Jim won a Railway Cup medal with Munster in 1971.

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Colm Tucker.

RUGBY —

BRENDAN

FOLEY

FOR the second time in their history, Shannon won the Munster Senior Cup in 1977 and one of the principals in this achievement was skipper Brendan Foley. Throughout the Cup campaign, the big man from the parish led his team by example and his influence was never more pronounced than in the Final itself, when Brendan roused his pack to a supreme effort. A fancied Garryowen team were left with no answers to the strength of Brendan's men.

First establishing himself as a force to be reckoned with in 1968 when, as a mere 17 year old, he helped his junior club St. Mary's to win the Munster Junior Cup, Brendan has gone on to scale the heights since. Three times capped by Ireland against France, England and Wales . . . all away games . . . Brendan has also represented Munster on 16 occasions. Brendan is very quick to praise the help he received in his younger days from Mick Hayes and the late "Milo" McInerney. With Shannon, Brendan cites Brian O'Brien and Michael Noel Ryan as being outstanding influences.





*Tony Ward*

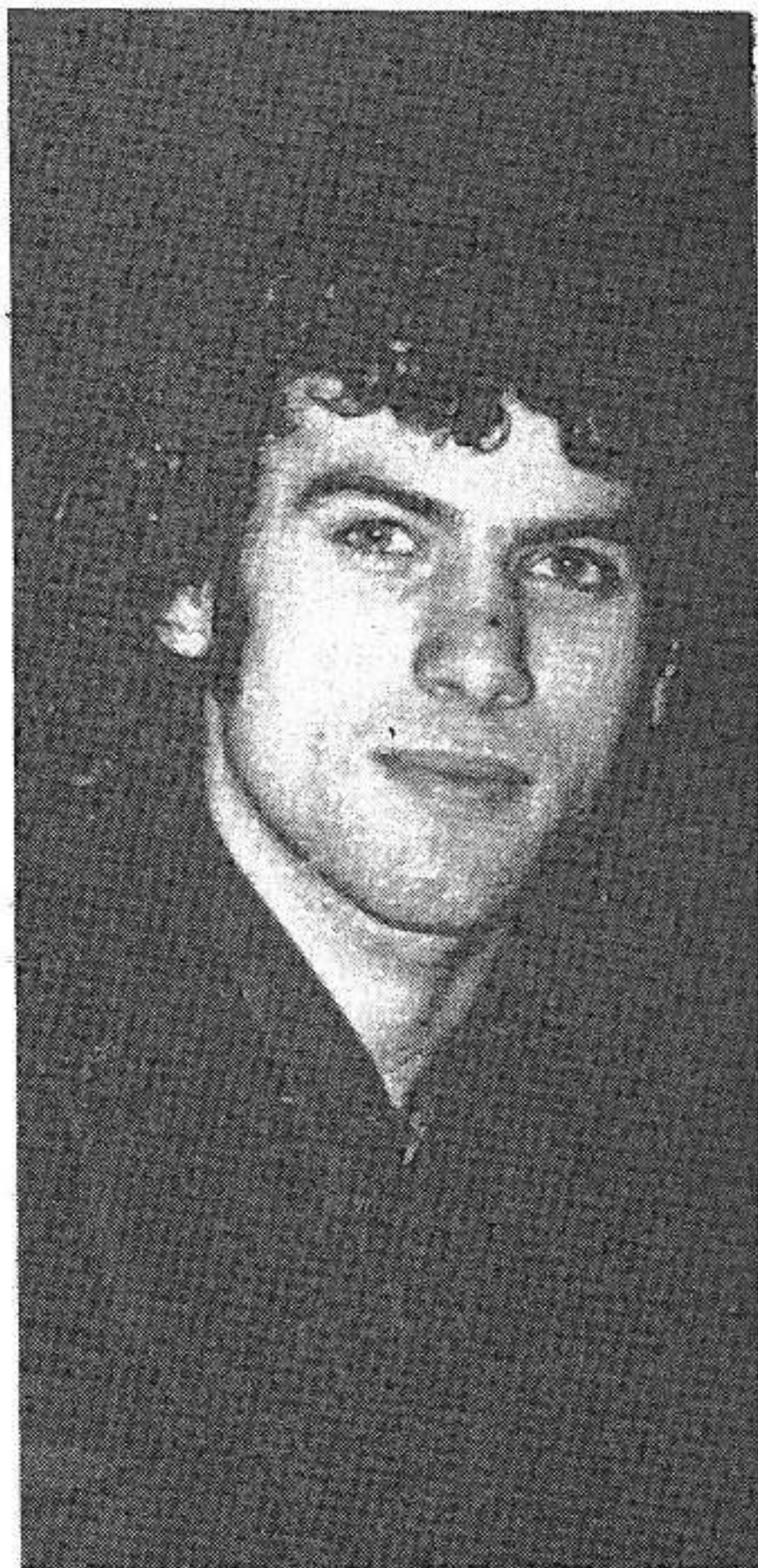
## MOST ENTERTAINING SPORTS PERSONALITY

## TONY WARD

IN AN era when the flair in sport has been largely replaced by fear, there could only be one winner of our Most Entertaining Sports Personality Trophy . . . Tony Ward. Since joining the 'light blues' in 1975, the stocky little Dubliner has made a tremendous impact on the Rugby world. Gifted with a unique attacking talent, Tony's jinking, tricky running has shattered many a good defence and he now stands on the threshold of a very promising career.

In his younger days, Tony, as is well known, played soccer with distinction and was 'capped' by the Irish selectors at schoolboy level.

Tony's club colleagues on an outstanding Rangers team included Donal Murphy (Coventry City), Gerry Ryan (Derby County), Pat Byrne (Bohemians) and Kevin Moran, the All-Star Dublin Footballer. At rugby, Tony was unlucky to miss out on a Leinster Schools 'cap' . . . being reserve to Ollie Campbell and Ian Burns in subsequent years. Incidentally, the reserve scrum-half in Tony's final year at college was John Robbie.



TONY won his first full 'cap' in January and his display was such as to now make him an automatic choice for the Green Jersey.



*Mick Mackey*



## HALL OF FAME — FRANK JOHNSON

ONE of the most famous soccer personalities to come out of Limerick in the post-war period was the genial Frank Johnson and he deservedly gains the Hall of Fame Award. In 1942, Frank began his career with Star Rovers before moving to Prospect in 1944. Four years later, Frank moved into the L.O.I. with Limerick. Between 1948-'51, Frank established himself as one of the best ball players on the Irish scene. So highly was he rated that Limerick refused a substantial transfer from Glasgow Celtic after Frank had played twice for the League of Ireland.

Eventually, in 1951, Frank moved to Distillery . . . the transfer fee being £1,000, a staggering figure at that time. For the next six years, Frank paraded his talents in the Irish League before returning to the L.O.I. in 1956 with Waterford. One season later, Frank was back in Limerick's colours where he finished his L.O.I. career in 1959. The names of the great players that Frank played with and against reads like a who's who of Irish soccer . . . Paddy Coad, Ronnie Nolan, Sean Cusack and Tommy Hamilton are just a few.



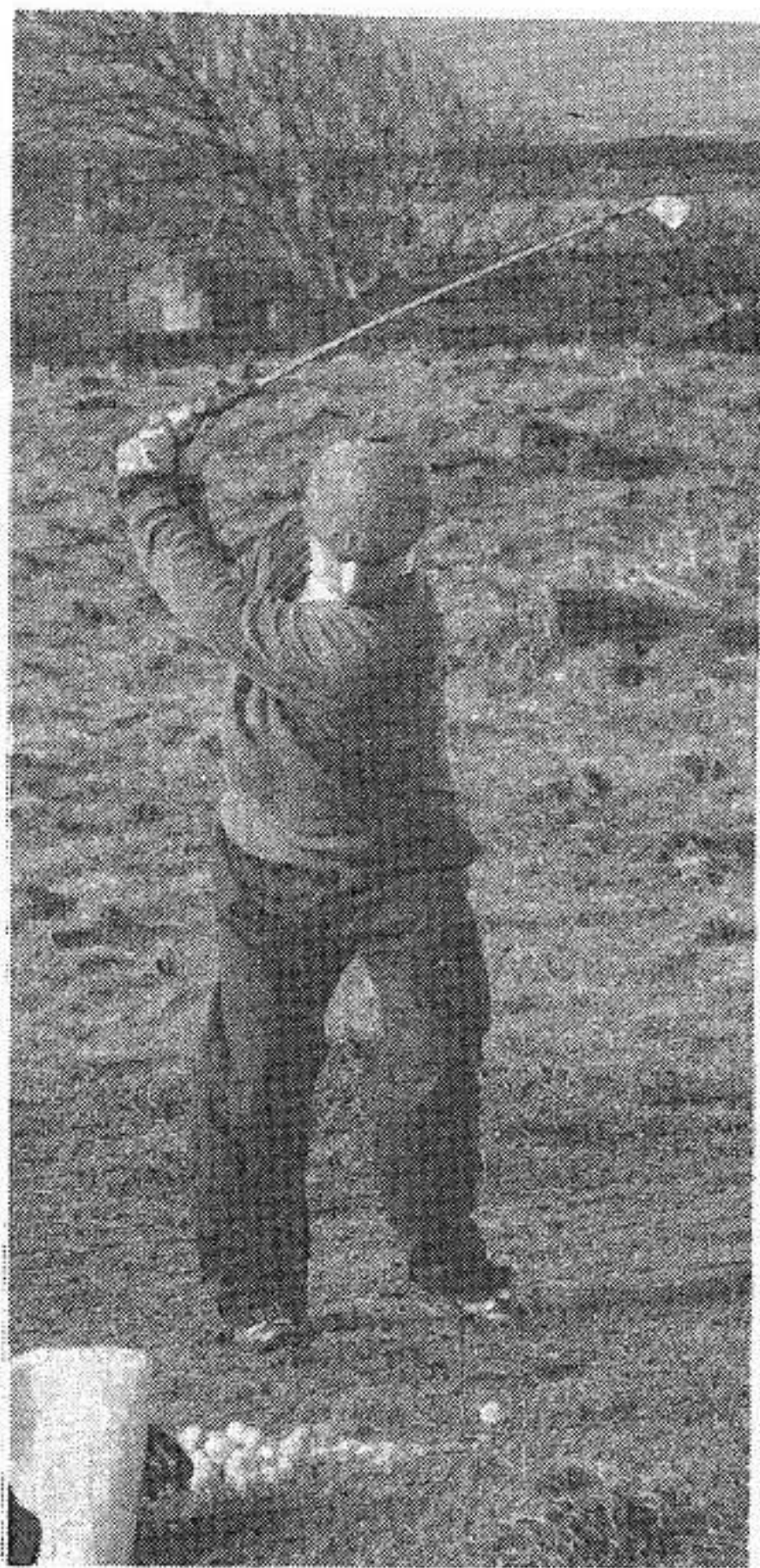
Always anxious to play-down his own ability, Frank, speaks glowingly of 'Togsie' Cunneen's merits as an outside-right and, of the current L.O.I. crop, he has tremendous regard for the abilities of Joe O'Mahoney and Al. Finucane.





# VINCENT NEVIN

Nearly every major National Trophy has gone Vincent's way during his spectacular career. He won the Irish Close Title in 1969 when he beat John O'Leary at Rosses Point . . . a Texaco award followed in due course. The West of Ireland in 1972 and the South in 1976 were also won by the Limerick golfer. Sixty-seven times capped by Ireland, Vincent won



**35, drew 10 and lost 22 of his international games . . . a really outstanding record.**





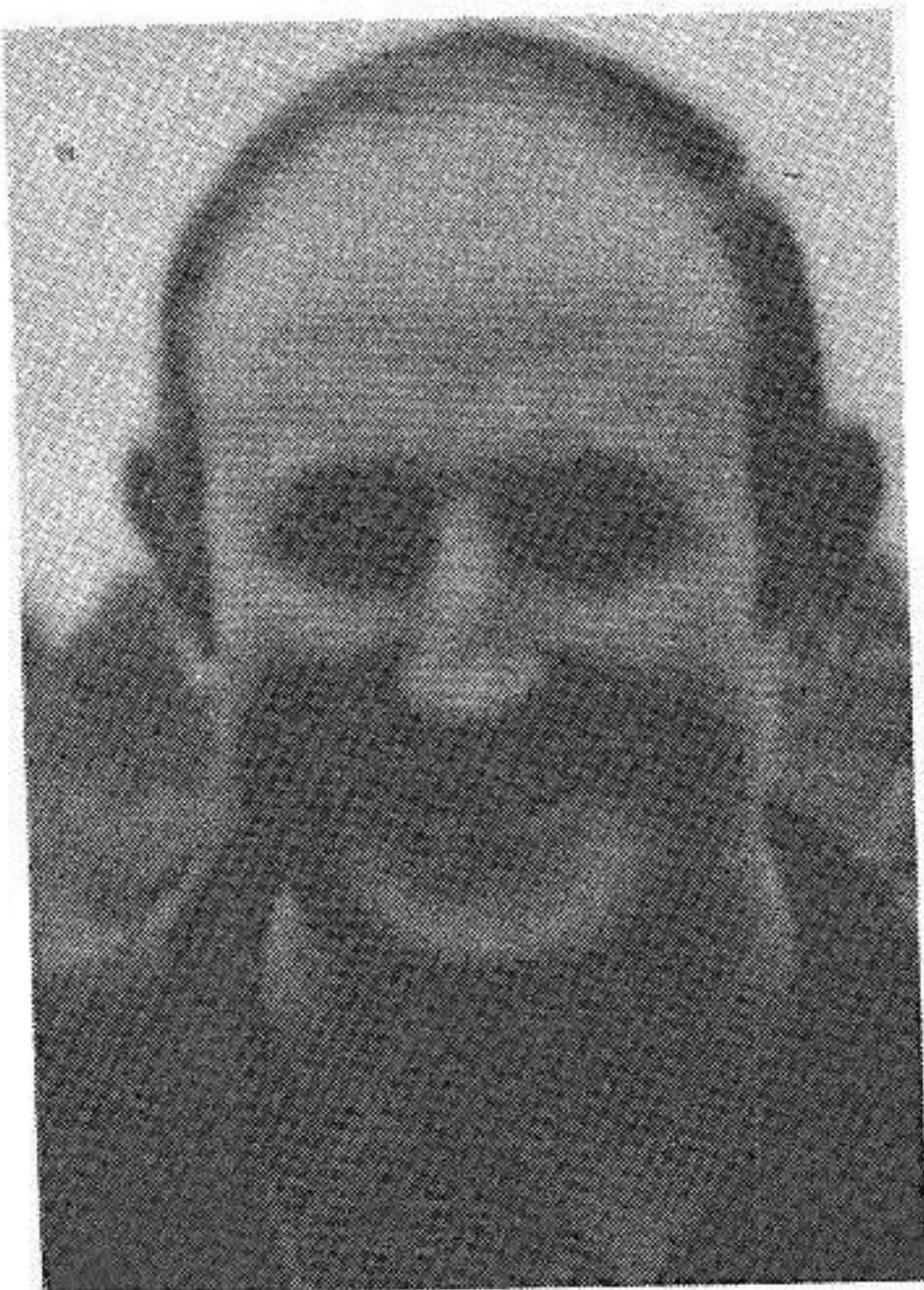
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## GREYHOUND RACING —

## CHRISTY DALY

1977 HAS seen popular greyhound owner and trainer Christy Daly achieve some outstanding successes. Dogs handled by Christy won no fewer than 31 races at many different venues. Major trophies to come Christy's way were the Guinness Puppy Stake, at Limerick, and the Derby Qualifier, at Thurles, both won by Daring Dandy (Here Sonny — Rosemoth); The Pigalle Wonder Stakes, at Shelbourne Park, with Simona Rose, a litter sister to Daring Dandy . . . this was Simona's 3rd Final of the year; the 'Jims Story' Trophy, at Limerick, with Newdown Blossom (Newdown Heather — Devon Blossom).

Christy rates Brave Bran (The Grand Silver — Rosemoth) as the best dog he ever handled and he is confident that 'Bran', who contested 9 finals during his career, will prove a very successful stud dog. Christy uses his old favourite Rosemoth as a foundation dam . . . dogs from her only two litters have already contested 31 finals throughout the country. A member of the



Greyhound Owners and Breeders Association, Christy throws up these two interesting and commendable suggestions for the attention of Bord na gCon (i) Heat-winners in every sweepstake should receive some prize-money (ii) a licensed trainer who travels over 50 miles to race his dogs should receive some travelling allowances.







## REMEMBER LIMERICK . . .


IN THE annals of history, Limerick will, perhaps, be remembered most of all for it's famous Treaty Stone, but closely rivalling that historic landmark for a place of honour will be the superb tradition of our city's sporting heroes.

And while this function is concerned with honouring our sportsmen of the present, perhaps it would be as well if we were to dwell for a moment on just a few of those who brought us joy in the past. On the hurling front, no name shines brighter than that of Mick Mackey . . . in every sense, the Ahane man is a legend in his own time and his feats of leading Limerick through their glory years in the '30's will never be forgotten as long as hurling is played. And ranking just behind Mackey in the list of Limerick's outstanding hurlers are men whose names conjure up visions of grandeur . . . Paddy Scanlan, Mickey Cross, Bob McConkey, Ned Cregan and Jackie Power.

Mention rugby, and the burly frame of Tom Clifford comes instantly to mind. As a prop-forward, Tom ranked with the best and his displays for Ireland and the Lions are still spoken of wherever rugby-men meet.

The world of soccer has also produced it's endearing characters; men like 'Bud' Aherne, Sean Cusack and 'Togsie' Cunneen and nearer the present day, the feat of Al. Finucane in gaining 11 full international caps whilst playing in the L.O.I. was a remarkable achievement. The list of sports . . . and the list of characters . . . is endless. Golf gave us the great John Burke; The racing world produced that outstanding National-Hunt jockey Martin Moloney; hockey had it's Noel O'Dwyer; athletics, it's John O'Donnell and Brendan O'Regan. Great names all . . . and they left us a great tradition.

But that tradition has not fallen on barren ground, as reflected in the outstanding merits of those sportsmen of the present . . . the 10 men and one lady chosen as Limerick's Sports Personalities of 1977. Through selfless dedication, they have reached the peak at their chosen sports . . . and the dedication I speak of involved many hours of training, toiling, sweating, struggling, until success was achieved. Have no doubt about it, 100% committment is the hallmark of all the sports personalities.





  
**LIMERICK WEEKLY ECHO  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN  
announce**

**LIMERICK  
SPORTS PERSONALITIES  
GALA BALL**

**at the  
LIMERICK INN  
on**

**MONDAY FEBRUARY 20th, 1978**

Awards will be presented by Cllr. Frank  
Prendergast, Mayor of Limerick.

**Music by Maurice Mulcahy Orchestra**

**TICKETS..... £10.00**

**Meal at 8.30 p.m. sharp**

**Dress Formal**

**\* Limited number of tickets available to general public.**

**Tickets now on sale at Limerick Weekly Echo Office, 51 O'Connell St.,**



*Handball:  
Tom McGarry*